

THE GOOD SOIL

October 2005

Views from Thomas of India (thomas.ivor@jesustemple.org)

Becoming Fruitful #3 – The Grape Harvest

John 15:1-2: I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

*Every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and **every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.***



The Sorek Valley Grapes: This valley in Israel produced some of its finest grapes. But much pruning happens to make the harvest excellent.

John Bevere, my teacher at the International College of Excellence, Chicago, while teaching us at class, asked us an interesting show of hands, "All those who believe that the past two years were the toughest in your life, please raise your hands." Amazingly, almost the entire class lifted their hands. He then proceeded to mention that this was not strange because God was refining His church in these last days - a good place to bring up this month's Good Soil focus, the Grape harvest - the 3rd in the sequence of 7 harvests in the land of Israel.

The grape vine is an interesting plant. It grows rapidly shooting off branches in all directions. However this raises an odd problem. If the vine is allowed to grow rampant, then the grapes that are produced are small and sour. Something nobody enjoys. To address this problem, the grape farmer has only one solution – PRUNING. He lops off many of the runaway branches of the vine and brings order. This enables the resources of the vine to be focused. Thus develops grape clusters that are full, rounded, succulent and sweet.

God too mentions in His word that He prunes us just like a grape farmer does. God's pruning is in love to enable greater fruitfulness. Hebrews 12:6 mentions 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...' These keys can help us endure the pruning and come out strong at the end of it.

Key 1: Stay still: When God's pruning occurs - freeze, meditate from His Word and cooperate with Him in making needed lifestyle corrections.

Key 2: Choose God-things over good things: Analyze every activity you do. Is it from God or are you doing it because it's just a good idea? Much pruning can be avoided by this.

Key 3: Sow into heaven: As God prunes, a lot of earthly comfort zones will shatter. In these last days, our sowing of finances should be a reflection of 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Happy harvesting!

(Views and comments, always welcome at thomas.ivor@jesustemple.org)

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The **Good Soil** represents honest, good-hearted people who hear God's message, cling to it, and steadily produce a huge harvest. **Luke 8:15 (NLT).**

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